



# COMMUNITY COMMENTS

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## *Roads to the Future\**

By ARTHUR E. MORGAN

It is animal nature — and men have much of their nature in common with animals — to center attention on the immediate emergency, and to be but little concerned over relatively distant events. Civilization, that is, the degree to which men have transcended the other animals, can be measured by the capacity and inclination to plan, to take into account interests that are more or less distant in time. Failure to see ahead, and to act on that seeing, is a chief reason for the halting pace of human progress.

Let us take a case, seemingly fanciful, but less so today than television and atomic power would have seemed a century ago, to illustrate the effects of foresight and of its lack.

Suppose the balance of military power between East and West remains even enough to restrain both sides from starting atomic war, while yet there is no reconciliation. Suppose, too, that a few generations or centuries from now trips beyond our atmosphere have been successful, and that the next move is the settlement of Mars.

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\*This is the third of a series of issues on "Fundamental Principles for Resolving Future Social Crises."

Which side will be first to achieve migration? Will each power, perhaps for generations, maintain a patrol of the stratosphere to prevent the other from sending out a colony, while itself endeavors constantly to slip a party of colonists past the enemy patrol and on its way? When prospective colonists of one side do elude the patrol and get to the destination, will they feel it necessary to exterminate any colonists from the other side, should they appear? The first settlers must put most of their resources into a military budget, for otherwise the enemy might sneak in and eliminate them with a few hydrogen bombs. Life on Mars, for whichever side should reach there first, would be loaded with fear, hatred and a backbreaking burden of preparedness. Since "offense is the best defense," preventive attack on the terrestrial enemy might become a major public policy.

What an inheritance to pass on to the larger world of humanity! As far as men might migrate, and no matter how many new homesites they might secure, there would remain that inheritance of dread, fear and hatred, and the burden of defense.

Suppose, on the other hand, that reconciliation should have taken place between East and West, between America and Russia. Cooperating as friends and neighbors they would accelerate the possibility of planetary migration. When the time

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came for the first shipload of pioneers, the passengers would consist of picked individuals of many nations and races, persons who individually and collectively were fit, acceptable to each other, and more than that, were warm friends with complete mutual confidence.

What a difference, then, in the life of the new settlement! Hatred and fear of man would be absent. Military budgets would be unnecessary. The energies of men would be available for mastering the new, perhaps very difficult, environment, for peopling the new home, and preparing further peaceful, pioneering migration.

All this, we repeat, may seem fantastic imagining, but no less so than some recent developments would have seemed a century or two ago. Repeatedly events outrun our expectations and our imagination. During the first half-century after America was discovered that historic event did not receive enough published recognition in all Europe to fill a single page in a present-day newspaper. When the Wright Brothers began flying, local newspaper men were not enough interested to go six miles to look into so preposterous a rumor.

If the day does come within the next few generations or centuries when men migrate to new homesites, prevailing human attitudes at that time may determine whether through centuries or millennia to come life will be controlled by hatred, dread and fear of death from afar, or whether there will be a larger world of peace and good will among men. The time for reconciliation is

now, while the "enemies" are close enough to each other to communicate. It would be very difficult for fear and hatred to be dissolved across vast empty spaces. Space curtains might be much more impenetrable than "iron curtains."

If a time for such migration does come it will be too late then to quickly change men's attitudes. If the larger world of peace and harmony does emerge it will be because habits of mutual respect, mutual confidence and good will have grown through many years, beginning in the face-to-face relationships of families and small groups and gradually spreading to become the prevailing temper and attitude of society.

The great crisis would have been largely prepared for before men knew what the crisis would be, for fundamentally the preparation for any one crisis in human affairs is preparation for almost all crises. It will not be frantic, "heroic," spectacular effort when the crisis appears which will save the day, but purposeful, sincere, humane living, chiefly in the relations of every day. It is in such relations that the temper of life is determined.

Our days and hours are not trivial, meaningless incidents. They are what the future will be made of. It may be that today and tomorrow, and in the years to come, by the manner in which we have relations with family, community and other groups we may be setting patterns of life for many years to come.

## *Nietzsche Was Wrong*

At least up to the First World War, it was deeply rooted doctrine of professional military men that war is inherently good, and necessary to maintain the virility of the breed. That feeling was in the mind of Nietzsche when he wrote in "The Genealogy of Morals":

A legal organization, conceived of as sovereign and universal, not as a weapon in a fight of complexes of power, but as a weapon against fighting. . . would be a principle hostile to life, a destroyer and dissolver of man, a symptom of fatigue, a shortcut to nothingness. . . . Humanity as a mass sacrificed to the prosperity of the one stronger species of man — that would be a progress.

At least so far as the last century and the future are concerned, Nietzsche and the militarists are wrong. War, fear and hate are inferior eugenic agencies. Strains both of excellence and of mediocrity appear in practically all ethnic groups. It is from many peoples of many diverse talents that the great men of the future will emerge. Selection by violence is exceedingly wasteful. It puts a premium on raw, arbitrary power and on deceit, intrigues, and cultivation of hatred.

Good will need not be softness, and is not inconsistent with the most realistic attitude toward human destiny. Compassion and pity need not be precursors of racial deterioration. The same foresight which lays the foundation for peace and

good will among men will explore possibilities for genetic and cultural betterment. The best social climate for such exploration will be a world of peace, mutual confidence and good will. On either a large or a small scale the qualities which make for good community life will be best also for promoting genetic virility and quality on a national or on a world-wide scale.

The community at its best, where men of good will share the burdens and opportunities of life in mutual confidence, is both a superior type of living and a training ground for fulfillment of the best promise of mankind on every scale of action. We do well to recognize its significance and to seek to fulfill its possibilities.

Good will never is complete and unalloyed, even in the best of communities. In practical life some degree of organization nearly always is considered necessary for maintaining peace and order, and to make up for deficiencies in personal and group motivation. Yet only where good will and fair play are dominant motivations will there be enduring peace. Otherwise efforts to secure peace and order by law and by force will generally fail. The proliferation of punitive laws, and increasing reliance on the military and the police, usually is evidence of social and personal deterioration. In distribution of interest and effort, emphasis on development of good will is more productive than emphasis on military defense or on police protection. Family and community living provide the best opportunities for incubation of good will.

## *Community Service, Inc.*

Incorporated in 1940, after a period of less formal development, Community Service, Inc., aims toward a clear understanding of the nature, significance, and possibilities of the small, primary-group community as essential to a wholesome and long-lived society. The numerous live, purposeful communities in this and other countries need contact with each other and with new ideas. Live spirits in dead communities need help and encouragement in their efforts to bring about a rebirth. Community Service is a center where ideas and attitudes concerning community may be appraised, developed and circulated. Its work is largely in response to many requests for help in specific cases. Arthur E. Morgan's book, The Small Community, the thirteen years of Community Service News, and its various other publications, have been guides for college classes and for many small communities. A list of the best books in the field is issued, with a mail order and library service for these and other publications. Speakers and consultants are provided or suggested, and training and counsel given those who visit Yellow Springs and Community Service from this and other countries. Periodic conferences on the small community are held, usually in Yellow Springs.

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